Boosting Competitiveness: Digital Branding of The Sreseh Mangrove Tourism Spot in Marparan Village

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Abstract   Tourism acts as a conduit for enhancing the economic conditions of villages located near tourist destinations. Sreseh Mangrove Tourism (WMS) in Marparan Village is a recently established tourist destination in Sampang Regency. The Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis) faces various obstacles in managing and conserving nature. These factors encompass the local population's limited level of technology skills and the absence of digital branding as a means of promotion. Digital branding is a very efficient promotional tool in the current technology age due to its ability to engage with social media users rapidly. Producing captivating content is essential as it has a favorable impact on public opinion and draws people to tourist destinations. In order to tackle this issue, we have established a program aimed at improving Pokdarwis' proficiency in utilizing technology for promotional purposes. This curriculum encompasses instruction, development, and support in the realm of digital branding. The program was successfully implemented, substantially enhancing participants' proficiency in generating digital material. The participants' videos were posted on Marparan Village's Instagram page. There are potential prospects for creating a mobile application in the future that includes digital content videos, digital promotions, and a directory of rental and vacation choices.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sreseh is a sub-district in Sampang Regency, East Java Province, Indonesia. This sub-district is located on Madura Island, about 43 kilometers from the regency's capital to the west through Blega, Bangkalan. The government center is in the village of Labuhan. In Sreseh Subdistrict, five villages have mangrove forests: Labuhan, Disanah, Junok, Klobur, and Marparan. Sreseh Subdistrict has Sreseh Mangrove Tourism (WMS) developed in two spot areas, namely WMS Spot Klobur and WMS Spot Marparan. Sreseh Mangrove Tourism (WMS) Marparan Village is one of the areas in Sreseh Subdistrict that is surrounded by rivers, so access to the location must use Speed Boats that have been granted by the Regional Government in 2021. The Regent of Sampang inaugurated this Marparan Village WMS tourist destination on March 15, 2023. The management of Marparan Village in the Sreseh Subdistrict is overseen by the Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS). Presently, the administration of WMS as a novel tourism destination has not been executed to its fullest potential and remains in its original state. Various strategies can be implemented to attract tourists to an area, and one effective approach is the implementation of Digital Branding for Tourism communities. Branding refers to enhancing the image of a tourist village to make it appear more vibrant, appealing, and memorable to people, attracting a larger number of visitors. However, the complex relationship between certification, labeling, and branding in the tourism business requires further examination (Visković & Logar, 2022). Digital Branding is one of the strategies to build a brand by utilizing digital

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platforms (Denga et al., 2023). Moreover Digital branding also become a strategies for promoting a spot as a travel destination, interacting with online users, and providing services that make travel easier and more enjoyable at every turn (Confetto et al., 2023).

Digital branding significantly impacts the tourism industry, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (Ardani, 2022). Several research papers have examined the role of digital branding in the tourism industry. Tevdoradze emphasizes the importance of utilizing modern websites, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technology, e-mail marketing, and mobile travel applications to build a strong brand in the digital marketing realm (Tevdoradze & Bakradze, 2023). Tran emphasizes the significance of social media in destination branding, particularly focusing on user-generated content and its impact on cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements (Tran & Rudolf, 2022). Gupta analyzes the extensive implementation of digital marketing in the tourism industry, with a focus on its ability to improve communication and influence consumer decisions (Gupta, 2018). Huerta-Álvarez investigates the relationship between communication on social media, the value of a brand, and the level of customer involvement with the brand in tourist locations, specifically in developing economies (Huerta-Álvarez et al., 2020). Moreover, the significance of city branding and image in shaping tourists' decisions to visit has been emphasized, demonstrating a substantial effect on the growth of Denpasar City as a heritage tourism destination (Prabainastu, 2020). Wulandari highlights the significance of social media in the promotion of Glagah Wangi Istambul Beach in Demak. The studies indicate that the success of Glagah Wangi Istambul Beach relies on a comprehensive strategy for destination branding, which encompasses both social media promotion (Wulandari et al., 2021). These studies emphasize the significance of digital branding in the tourism sector and its capacity to boost sales and attract more visitors.

In 2023, the Department of Tourism and Culture collected statistics indicating that the total number of tourists to Sampang Regency was 225,707. The distribution of this quantity between locations is likewise characterized by unevenness, as only a limited number of sites are able to attract visitors (Siregar et al., 2024). Pantai Lon Malang is recognized as the most prominent destination due to its extensive exposure on social media. Given its status as an emerging tourism location, WMS Marparan should have already transitioned its promotional approach from conventional techniques to digital channels, namely leveraging social media. According to the collected data,

WMS Marparan currently does not have any presence on social media platforms and lacks proficient individuals who can create digital content. Given these circumstances, it is imperative to participate in digital branding to improve WMS Marparan's visibility and strive to attain the same level of popularity as Lon Malang Beach.

2. METHOD

Our community engagement activities were carried out through several stages or steps to implement the solutions offered to overcome the problems of Srereh Mangrove Tourism Village. There were three solutions to this problem. First, training was held to improve the human resources of the surrounding village community in the use of technology. Second, a digital brand was created in the form of digital content, such as images, photos, activities, videos, and interesting content, to be disseminated on social media as promotional media. The third activity was the assistance provided for the tourism village management community, in this case, the Pokdarwis, in updating information or digital content for the sustainability of this digital branding. The presentation of a series of digital branding activities at WMS Marparan is presented in Table 1.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Several programs have been implemented in our community engagement activities in Marparan Sreseh Village, as shown in Figure 1.

3.1 Training in graphic design and social media management

The first activity in the program was training in digital branding to increase public interest in Sreseh Mangrove Tourism Village. The speakers, MBKM students, were prepared to provide material on creating posters, pamphlets, promotional photos, and editing images for social media using popular and easily accessible applications such as *Canva*. This application was chosen considering the background of the trainees, and it is called Pokdarwis, who lack proficiency in computer skills, making it challenging to use design software like *CorelDRAW* or *Photoshop*. *Canva* is a well-known platform for creating visual content, providing tools for graphic design and online publications, and its ease of use makes it suitable even for beginners.

Nine members of the Pokdarwis attended this training. The results obtained from this activity were used to create content for social media updates related to the promotional activities of Sreseh Mangrove Tourism Village. This

Table **1** . Digital branding program at WMS Marparan

No.	Program	Method
1	Forum Group Discussion	Knowledge Sharing
2	Photo and video of Marparan village	Hands-on Tutorial
3	Making tourism promotion media	Hands-on Tutorial
4	Graphic design and social media management training	Hands-on Tutorial
5	Training on the use of cameras for digital branding	Hands-on Tutorial
6	Making village mapping applications using *Lumion* design applications and *Sketch-Up*	Knowledge Sharing

Problems

Solutions

• WMS Spot Marparan is a new tourist attraction in Sampang
• Technology adoption among human resources is still quite low.

Training how to use technology for Digital branding

• No usage of social media to promote tourism attraction in WMS Marparan.
• No usage of digital branding

Training how to promote and management social media for digital branding

• Since digital branding is permanent, support efforts are necessary.
• Due to the limited timing of Assistancy, Pokdarwis must acquire the necessary skills.

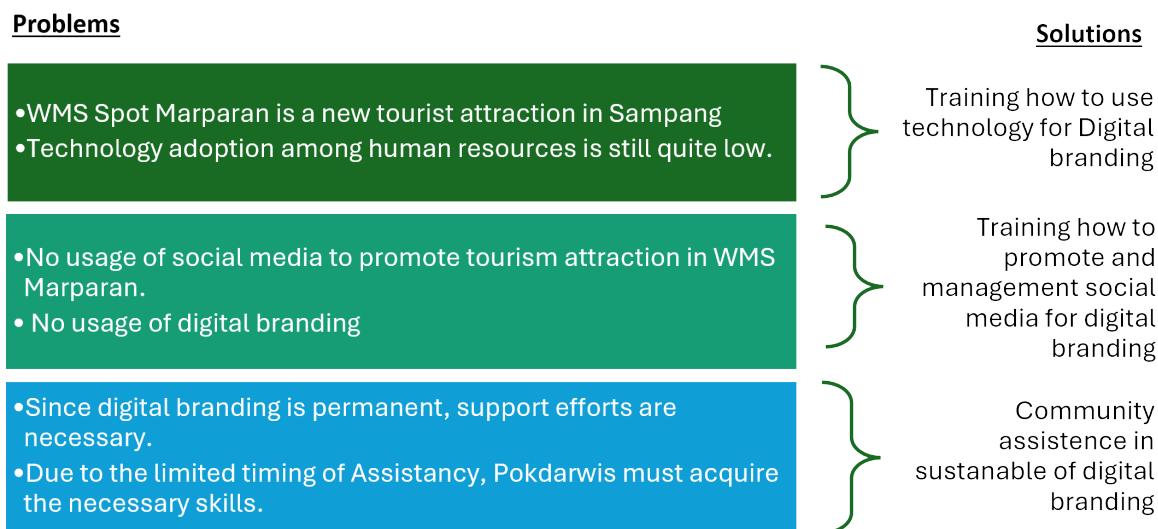Community assistence in sustainable of digital branding

Figure 1 . Problems and solutions

content includes food and beverage menu offers, special promotions related to entrance ticket discounts on significant days, showcasing pictures of new spots, and more. With these improved skills, Pokdarwis was becoming increasingly proactive in creating attractive visual displays on social media, thereby enhancing the marketing efforts for Sreseh Mangrove Tourism Village.

These activities were carried out at the location of the tourist village with support from those involved in community engagement, as shown in Figure 2. This activity aimed to enhance the technological skills of the community for disseminating marketing content. Participants also learned about the advantages and disadvantages of using social media for digital content dissemination and branding. The target audience includes individuals aged between 20 and 50 years. This age group was considered more receptive to technology compared to older individuals. With these participants, it was expected that they would quickly grasp the material presented by the trainers and be able to apply the technology effectively. In this activity, the community engagement team sought assistance from the Department of Youth, Sports, Culture, and Tourism (Disporabudpar) of Sampang Regency to ensure the activity was carried out as planned.

Figure 2 . Training in graphic design and social media management at Pokdarwis WMS Marparan

The facilities needed in this activity were the location of the seminar procurement of a participant resource person and other supporting facilities such as mobile phones as a means of technological development and LCD projectors that may later be used in material presentation. The output of this activity was the creation of a means for disseminating information related to tourist attractions, namely *Instagram* accounts or *TikTok* accounts. More news about this training has been published in the mass media Klik Madura (2023).

3.2 Digital branding videos

In addition to providing training, the objective of the completed activities was to create videos using the concept of virtual tours. A virtual tour is a digital simulation experience that allows users to explore and observe a specific physical environment or location without having to physically be there. It is often used for scenic purposes, education, property promotion, or virtual exploration of far away or inaccessible places. Virtual tours attempt to replicate and present physical locations in digital form. This can include buildings, tourist attractions, museums, real estate properties, historical sites, or even natural environments.

Virtual tours often combine various media, such as images, videos, sound, and text, to provide additional information or explanations about the location or object being viewed. They are used for a variety of purposes, such as promoting tourist attractions, assisting in property marketing, facilitating remote education, or providing users with insights into certain places. Virtual tours have become a popular tool for presenting information and experiences that are close to real life in the digital world. They are often used to inform, inspire, and entertain users and to facilitate communication and learning in various contexts.

Nine Pokdarwis members, five *Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) students, and three academics who spoke at the training were present for the digital branding course. The training produced digital
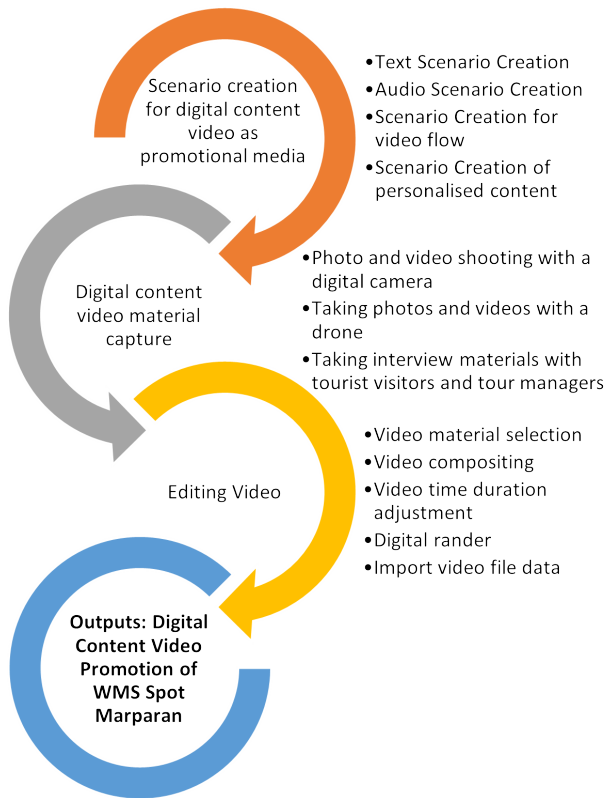
Figure **3** . The process of making digital content videos for promoting the tourism of WMS Marparan

Figure **4** . Digital branding video of the WMS Marparan

branding movies that were used as promotional materials. Figure 3 shows the steps of the procedure. In order to make sure that the digital video is no longer than five minutes, a scenario must be designed before any digital content is created. The short running time of the videos tries to draw in viewers and entice them to go to the place. Digital cameras, cell phones, and other photo and video devices were needed for this activity. When taking pictures and videos, keeping a close eye on the tourist site is crucial. According to earlier studies, finding points of interest within a tourist destination might help create intriguing content. Since not all sites have the same points of interest, careful observations are necessary to determine which areas are best suited for digital media content. After capturing the photos and videos, the next step was editing. One of the roles assigned to MBKM Village students was

to edit the videos to meet the marketing needs of the tourism village. The expected outcome of this activity was the creation of effective promotional media in the form of marketing content videos. The completed promotional video can be seen in Figure 4.

3.3 Training on how to use a camera for digital branding

Training on using a camera for digital branding took place in the following session. There were only seven Pokdarwis representatives present at this training. The training resources covered a variety of subjects, including camera kinds, comprehending various camera settings, learning about lighting and exposure, and investigating more advanced shooting techniques. Participants also learned how to use photography and videography to successfully capture and communicate the essence of a brand or message. The documentation of this program can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure **5** . Training on how to use a camera for digital branding

3.4 3D mapping of the WMS Marparan using Lumion and Sketch Ups

The purpose of creating the mapping application was to provide a visual representation of the development concept for the next five years of WMS Marparan. *Lumion*, an architectural rendering and visualization software, was used to generate realistic views of villages or environmental projects. The 3D mapping results are depicted in Figure 6.

Figure **6** . 3D mapping of the WMS Marparan

The process of creating the 3D mapping required a laptop with high specifications, which was a resource

Figure **7** . An illustration of pokdarwis mentoring activities

lacking among Pokdarwis members. Consequently, we were unable to proceed with the training. Considering the significant need for this 3D mapping by Disporabudpar, we created it in collaboration with MBKM students and subsequently delivered the 3D mapping to Disporabudpar.

3.5 Mentoring

To keep information up to date and attract visitors, Pokdarwis representatives serving as tourism village managers must help them update their digital identity. Inaccurate information may spread due to a lack of updates, creating the appearance that the village's administration is stagnant and turning away potential guests. Mentoring actions are described to help with this, as shown in Figure 7. The goal is to provide Pokdarwis representatives the autonomy to oversee digital branding and make sure that the community is informed of the most recent information. This is essential for presenting recent improvements to the tourist village, such as new attractions, and drawing additional guests.

In this activity, Pokdarwis representatives would be tasked with updating offline and online digital branding. Offline tasks involve capturing photos or videos, while online tasks include video editing during mentoring sessions. The necessary facilities for this activity remain the same as those required for the second activity. The desired outcome is to have a dedicated Pokdarwis member responsible for digital branding development and information updates, serving as an effective promotional medium on social media platforms. The tourism village can enhance its appeal and draw more visitors by ensuring that information is current and engaging.

4. CONCLUSION

The community participation project took place from August 2023 to December 2023. The training sessions have proven effective in enhancing Pokdarwis' proficiency in digital branding. WMS Marparan will now have more opportunities to engage with travelers through digital branding. As a result of these community participation efforts, WMS Marparan's social media presence has been established, making it easier to promote tourism destinations and enabling direct communication with potential visitors. This will enhance marketing campaign effectiveness by allowing personalized travel experiences based on behavior, interests, and other variables. Tourism managers have benefited from successful knowledge transfer resulting from community involvement efforts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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